



## HOUSING CONNECT

### MINUTES OF THE ELECTRONIC MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 21, 2021

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**PRESENT (video):**

Jennifer Johnston – Chair  
Spencer Moffat – Vice Chair  
Phil Bernal – Commissioner  
Christine Nguyen – Commissioner  
Gwen White – Commissioner

**EXCUSED:**

Mark Johnston – Commissioner  
Erin Litvack – Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT (video):**

Janice Kimball – Chief Executive Officer  
Andre Bartlome – Chief Finance Officer  
Mike Kienast – Chief Operating Officer  
Zach Bale – Chief Programs Officer  
Jarín Blackham – Information Technology Director  
Russell Opatz – Supportive Housing and Services Director  
Roy Mustin – Data Analyst  
Dan Pincock – Executive Administrator

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**COMMENCE**

The April 2021 Housing Connect Board of Commissioners meeting started at 11:32 a.m., and Chair Jennifer Johnston welcomed all in attendance to the meeting. Housing Connect Data Analyst Roy Mustin participated in the meeting and was introduced to the Board.

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no one from the public in attendance.

**2. CONSENT AGENDA**

The Board approved the March 17 Board meeting minutes. Commissioner White motioned to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Nguyen seconded the motion, with Chair Jennifer Johnston, Vice Chair Moffat, and Commissioners Nguyen and White voting in favor. Commissioner Bernal abstained from the vote, as he was absent from the March meeting. The remaining items on the Consent Agenda included the Hunter Hollow activity report which indicated that the property has been transferred to RAD and will now begin a comprehensive renovation, a note of appreciation for an Eligibility staff member, a thank you note from a former Bud Bailey Apartments resident, and staff changes.

**3. REVIEW OF BOARD RETREAT GOALS**

Housing Connect CEO Janice Kimball reviewed the 3 primary retreat goals and then asked Housing Connect Supportive Housing and Services Director Russell Opatz to briefly review Goal #1.

*- Goal #1: Develop a Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) scorecard to assess both current projects and opportunities, keeping in mind the resources required and the populations served.*

Director Opatz presented the proposed SDoH scorecard template and the SDoH categories. The scorecard is a tool to use for future developments and projects to objectively apply a metric across several different categories within SDoH. The Board offered some feedback. Chair Jennifer Johnston asked about needs on the waitlist that we know we are not seeing but that are on the horizon (she used the example of single seniors when she first started as a commissioner). CEO Janice Kimball said that Housing Connect can cite that it will follow the needs assessment (from the annual plan) but also housing market studies, as well. Commissioner Bernal asked if the scorecard has been shared with community partners. Director Opatz remarked that many of Housing Connect's partners, officially or

unofficially, are adopting a similar framework. Chair Jennifer Johnston recommended sharing the scorecard with the County Mayor and the municipalities.

- *Goal #2: Use Section 8 vouchers to increase the amount of supportive housing as quickly as possible by splitting available vouchers into two uses: projects controlled by Housing Connect and those created and in partnership with other developers and service providers.* A Request for Proposals (RFP) to create 100 units of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) will be issued in May.

CEO Janice Kimball updated the Board by informing them that Housing Connect will be releasing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to create up to 100 units of permanent and supportive housing next month. She added that this will fit nicely with the tax credit cycle.

- *Goal #3: Invest \$8.6M from the sale of Public Housing Scattered Sites to create the greatest total number of units by splitting the dollars available into 1) a proposed Fund and 2) for immediate acquisition/targeted equity investments* – see Resolution #1032.

CEO Janice Kimball referenced the resolution which the Board would vote on, which will restrict \$8.6 million from the sale of disposition proceeds into a revolving development pool and for acquisition funding.

#### **4. RESOLUTION #1032 – RESTRICTED FUNDS FROM THE DISPOSITION SALES**

The Board then discussed Resolution #1032, which restricted the money for the uses described above. Chair Jennifer Johnston recommended that CEO Janice Kimball and CFO Andre Bartlome create a memo to track where the proceeds are being used. Commissioner Bernal suggested having some before/after pictures to show officials how the money is being used to improve people's lives. CEO Janice Kimball said the agency would work out some sort of tracking mechanism to show what Housing Connect has done, using before/after visuals. Vice Chair Moffat motioned to approve Resolution #1032, and Commissioner White seconded the motion, and all Board members present (Chair Jennifer Johnston, Vice Chair Moffat, and Commissioners Bernal, Nguyen, and White) voting in favor. Resolution #1032 (to restrict the disposition funds) was approved.

#### **5. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There were no items for the Executive Session.

#### **6. CEO's REPORT**

Housing Connect CEO Janice Kimball highlighted for the Board the following activities/issues:

- Renovations at the Main Office: LED lights are being installed; the lobby renovation has started. She thanked Mike Kienast and Lee Wight for their teams' work on the renovations.

- Development activities: Housing Connect is hiring a recruitment firm to fill Jeremy Runia's position (Real Estate Development Director). Troy Hart has tendered his resignation, effective April 30, and Housing Connect is looking to re-market/re-design his position to be more of a project manager. Both positions are in high demand these days.

- New City Plaza (High Rise/City Plaza): The High Rise has been a challenging project, mostly due to the complexities of the project, with two different housing authorities, HUD, and the financing structure.

Housing Connect will be posting a contract position for an owner's rep to help oversee the renovation at the High Rise and has contracted with a relocation specialist to ensure all residents are supported during the renovation. Housing Connect is taking the lead on development and procurement.

A Financial/Technical Assistant RFP has also gone out (to include closing with equity and financial partners and to assist with the HUD side of closing). Housing Connect hopes to have a decision this week.

Housing Connect has received its 5<sup>th</sup> and final extension of the bonds. There is a plan in place to close on the bonds in July and to start construction in the Fall. The agency received the go-ahead from HUD on the renewed CHAP agreement, which is the first step in moving the project forward. She reminded the Board that the City Housing Authority will take the rent assistance for the project, and Housing Connect will do the property management. This has not been formalized, and Chair Jennifer Johnston asked if there was anything the Board can do to help formalize the agreement, and CEO Janice Kimball said she was going to follow up with Legal (Ballard Spahr). Chair Jennifer Johnston gave the directive to work towards formalizing the agreement.

- COVID: Housing Connect projects and housing have done well during COVID – Housing Connect staff have done a great job keeping the programs near capacity. Overdue re-certifications are minimal and are at the level they were two years ago. There is some backlog with preventative maintenance for Public Housing and with quality control inspections for Section 8 (Housing Connect is 787 inspections

behind, since this was paused during COVID).

- Rent collections: Housing Connect is looking at \$106K across the entire housing portfolio in rent owed that the agency does not think it will be able to collect. Staff have done all that they can do to engage with clients and to make sure that they have the resources they need to apply for any COVID relief funding. In addition, Housing Connect anticipates \$141K in costs to turn around vacant units, if these cases result in evictions (approximately 40 problem units). Frontline staff have helped tenants with COVID relief assistance applications, but some clients are just not engaging after repeated attempts. COO Mike Kienast pointed out that the majority of the residents in this situation are at Bud Bailey and Bodhi, which have more market units.

- Section 8 HCV program: The joint waitlist (with the City housing authority) has been closed. Presently, the agency is overspent and overleased (which has also happened in the past) and is monitoring this and will be working with HUD to resolve this. CEO Janice Kimball said the agency will need to find a better way to track the attrition rate in real-time, which usually stays constant. CFO Andre Bartlome added that the per unit costs went up significantly during the last year, which was one of the main reasons for overspending. HUD has mechanisms in place for applying for additional funding (which Housing Connect is in the process of applying for), and the Board would be updated after Housing Connect meets with HUD.

- Moving To Work (MTW): Housing Connect has not heard yet from HUD on whether or not it was accepted for MTW Cohort 2. The next MTW application deadlines are coming up (for Cohorts 3 and 4), and if Housing Connect has not been notified by May, it will have to submit a new application for Cohort 4 prior to finding out if it is awarded under rent reform (Cohort 2), in which case, Executive Administrator Dan Pincock will send out a tentative Special Board Meeting invitation for August 4 to go over the new application.

## **7. BUDGET**

CFO Andre Bartlome was asked to remind the Board about important and upcoming budget dates. He told them that in the first week of May, the agency should have a “close-to-final” budget, and there will be a Finance Committee meeting on the 2nd Friday of May (May 14), which Board members are invited to participate and provide their input. Management will go through big budget items at the May Board meeting and get final input and approval to finalize employee benefits. The overall FY2021-2022 budget will be presented to the Board for approval in June.

Chair Jennifer Johnston asked CFO Bartlome for CEO comp information for the May Board meeting, and he said that Housing Connect will be providing it for all positions (not just for the CEO) this year. CEO Janice Kimball agreed to review what is discussed at the Finance Committee meeting with Chris Nguyen (who will not be available for the Finance Committee meeting).

## **8. PRESENTATIONS**

- Demographics dashboard: The dashboard quickly provides key demographics for all agency properties and programs and also by specific property. Housing Connect Data Analyst Roy Mustin went over the “point-in-time” demographics dashboard (point-in-time = the data is refreshed every day). He said the dashboard is an infographic designed to provide demographic information primarily for head of households and is intended to be an “at a glance”, quick solution for a common question and is flexible to show a wide variety of property and program demographic information, depending on the user’s needs.

Chair Jennifer Johnston suggested that he adjust the Ethnicity headline (as based on the HUD requirement for Hispanic ethnicity). Housing Connect IT Director Jarin Blackham added that they want to start getting historic information so that they can start working on trend lines to determine whether certain ethnicities are increasing or decreasing. Chair Jennifer Johnston also asked about the “Race” information (as it doesn’t add up to households served), and Roy Mustin said he would look into this further. She suggested comparing the data to the overall population of the area that Housing Connect serves.

Both Chair Jennifer Johnston and CEO Janice Kimball thanked Roy Mustin and Jarin Blackham for their work on the dashboard.

- Staff Survey: CFO Andre Bartlome reviewed the trends, key points, highlights, takeaways, and main results from the recent staff survey. For areas that need improvement or are trending down from previous surveys, Chair Jennifer Johnston suggested that CEO Janice Kimball include some goals at the next Board meeting for the upcoming fiscal year which shows that staff have been heard and what management is going to do about the particular issue/s.

## **9. COMMISSIONERS’ INPUT**

Commissioner White did not have anything to report from the Resident Advisory Board (RAB), as no RAB meeting was held this month. She praised the Kelly Benson Resident Services staff for being “on top of everything.” She was grateful for what they did yesterday to help residents get through today without having water service (because the city had a scheduled shut-down of water services). She also said all but 10 tenants have been vaccinated.

Vice Chair Moffat offered to help or provide feedback with the real estate position hirings. CEO Janice Kimball also asked him to participate on the Owner's Rep (High Rise) selection committee, which he agreed to do.

Commissioner Nguyen said she is working closely with several staff to ensure different individuals are moving ahead in the NED process and is thrilled with the team. She said she continues to be impressed by the staff she works with.

**10. OTHER**

Housing Connect Supportive Housing and Services Director Russell Opatz pointed out the link to the Housing Connect Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) website which has up-to-date resources for each of the various categories. Chair Jennifer Johnston commented that it is a great community resource. The link to the Housing Connect SDoH website is: <https://housingconnect.org/sdoh>

**ADJOURN**

Housing Connect CEO Janice Kimball thanked everyone for their time and service, and Chair Jennifer Johnston adjourned the meeting at 12:59p

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Pincock  
Executive Administrator